



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **State Tobacco Quitline Saves Millions in Health-Care Costs**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Tobacco Quitline has saved North Dakota citizens more than \$5 million in health-care costs since it began in September 2004, according to Michelle Walker, Quitline coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health.

The savings is calculated based on the 1,772 callers who have quit smoking or chewing tobacco with the Quitline's help. About \$1,623 in medical expenses is saved annually for every smoker who quits, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Quitline offers free, individualized counseling to smokers or spit-tobacco users who call 1.800.QUIT.NOW. The Quitline also offers free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges to qualified enrollees and offers an audio library service, allowing people to listen to prerecorded messages that will help them with the quitting process. People who want to quit using tobacco, health-care providers, and family and friends of tobacco users are able to call the Quitline.

"We've known for a long time that North Dakota's Quitline is very successful," Walker said. "We have a 12-month quit rate of nearly 35 percent, meaning that after 12 months, 35 percent of the people who received counseling are still not using tobacco. That rate ranks very high when compared to quit rates for other quitlines. And 97 percent of our Quitline users say they would recommend the program to others.

"To see that the Quitline has saved the state more than \$5 million dollars in health-care costs is another validation of the importance of the Quitline," Walker said. "The more people we help quit using tobacco, the less money we'll spend on health care and lost productivity. Annually, North Dakota spends more than \$250 million on health-care and \$192 million on lost productivity due to smoking."

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The Quitline is part of the state's comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program and is funded by the North Dakota Legislative Assembly with money received from the Master Settlement Agreement and by the CDC.

"It's very exciting to see how successful North Dakota's Quitline is," said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. "Quitline services are helping to save lives and spare many people from the devastating health effects caused by tobacco use."

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in North Dakota. Nearly 900 people in the state die each year due to tobacco-related illnesses.

For more information about the Quitline, call Walker at 701.328.2315. For more information about quitting tobacco, call the Quitline toll-free at 1.800.QUIT.NOW (1.800.784.8669).

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